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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Condition of Farmers in Kropidlo, District Miechow/
Local Politics/Local Industry/Religion

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1. [redacted] conditions in the small village of Kropidlo, near Slaboszow, district Miechow, dates through Spring 1953.

Situation of Typical Local Kulak

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2. [redacted] a farmer who owns 15 hectares of land in Kropidlo. Classified as a definite 'kulak' he is exposed to continuous pressure by the authorities. This pressure has already wrought great changes in his life. Before World War II he owned four good horses. With them he could cultivate his fields properly. Now he has only two horses and they are very weak. Even if a State Machine-Tractor hire station existed in Kropidlo, which is not the case, he would not be allowed, as a kulak, to take advantage of it.
3. "He cannot cultivate the entire 15 hectares by himself; sometimes his family come to help but they are not enough. He cannot hire hands from the village, even though some people are out of work, because it is forbidden to hire labor privately. He would have to hire labor through the village headman which would cost him daily about 100 zlotys per person, of which the worker receives 80 zlotys and the state 20 zlotys. The general attitude towards the 'kulak' is: 'If you cannot carry on, give up the land to the poor or to the cooperative'.
4. "Also because of being a 'kulak' this farmer is required to lend his two horses and farm machinery to anybody who wishes to borrow them. If he refused, a poorer peasant from the same village might denounce him to the headman (soltys), which would result in the confiscation of horses or machinery for an indefinite period. The consequences of such borrowing are disastrous to the owner. Horses are returned by a casual borrower in a dreadful state, and so is machinery. In Winter 1952-53 this farmer's harvester and triple-plow were ruined by casual users. Nobody has troubled to repair them, certainly not the owner who said it simply was not worth it. **SEE LAST PAGE FOR SUBJECT & AREA CODES**

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25X1

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- 2 -

5. "The taxation pressure on owners of larger farms is strong. For this farmer the annual taxation for the year 1952 came to 25,000 zlotys. The farm is not able to carry this burden out of its production; therefore the tax is paid at the expense of capital. Furthermore, towards the end of the year, according to the practice now introduced in Poland, an additional tax (domiar podatkowy) was imposed, amounting to 7,500 zlotys.
6. "The quotas of compulsory deliveries are calculated by hectare. With heavy taxation and compulsory quotas, farming in Poland simply does not pay. The quotas change from year to year. Through them the villages feel the effects of the Six Year Plan. For instance, if more sugar is needed for the general economic plan, the authorities raise the sugar beet quotas. If vegetable oils are needed, high delivery quotas of mustard and rapeseed are imposed on farmers. Failures to deliver are punished severely and can land a man in prison or forced labor camp. The first sentence is usually for six weeks, the second for six months and the third for two years in a forced labor camp.
7. "For 1952 this Kropidlo farmer was obliged to deliver: 300 kgs of wheat or rye from every hectare under cultivation; 200 kgs of oats or barley per hectare, 300 kgs of bacon. Compulsory quotas of milk amounted to $3\frac{1}{2}$ liters per day per cow. The quota of eggs was so high that in practice it meant one egg per hen, per day.
8. "Like many other farmers, this man was compelled to buy a part of this produce on the free market; otherwise he would not have been able to deliver his quotas. For a delay in delivering, he could be punished with a quota increase of five to eight per cent. Also, by way of punishment, he could be refused official allocations of fertilizers, nails, lubricants, and above all of coal and wood for heating purposes and for farming.
9. "In spite of all his efforts, this farmer failed his 1952 milk deliveries because there was a drought and the cows were in poor condition. For this he was fined 850 zlotys. His son sent him this money from his seaman's pay. Otherwise some of the farmer's possessions would have been put on auction and sold. Incidentally, the farmer survived the war with six cows, but now is able to keep and feed only two. He was considering selling them in Spring 1953.
10. "Under the German occupation it was far easier to deceive the authorities about compulsory quotas than it is now. It was a general practice under the Germans to deliver a small young pig in place of a large, well-fed one, which was slaughtered for the owner's private use. Now such a stratagem is out of the question. The village council holds detailed records of every single chicken, and the system of mutual denunciations has become so developed that even the neighbours' children carry tales.
11. "People who deliver their quotas regularly and are politically reliable, get coupons from the village council to buy substantial goods like coal, paraffin, industrial oil, leather and clothing. Goods bought with these coupons are 25-30% cheaper than those on the ordinary market. It is impossible to obtain coal without coupons.
12. "Formerly, the farmer often travelled to Sosnowiec where the miners were ready to barter coal for food. These transactions were very popular. Now, however, with coal prices up from 100 zlotys to nearly 400 zlotys per ton, the farmers can no longer afford to buy coal for cash or barter. This increase in coal prices has of course been caused by the 'exports' to the USSR.
13. [REDACTED] the agricultural policy of the regime is a failure. This policy has created idleness and apathy among rich and poor peasants alike. The poor peasants of course get some privileges: smaller delivery quotas and generally better treatment. But they also are annoyed by the pressure of the regime. In Kropidlo for instance, they feel that it was better to have one hectare undisturbed than more under the Communist regime.
14. "Everybody knows cases of the prosecution of farmers for failures in compulsory deliveries. [REDACTED] from the district of Kartuzy was sentenced to $1\frac{1}{2}$ years for slaughtering his own pig. Farmers have received two years for failing to

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25X1

25X1

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- 3 -

25X1 fulfill saving plans. In Spring 1953 [] a 'kulak' from the village of Krepa, commune of Golcza, near Miechow, had recently been sentenced to two years. His 'crime' was lateness in completing the sowing of his fields. His farm had 32 acres of fields, and the work had to be done with the help of two horses only, in incessant rain. This was not accepted as an excuse.

25X1 15. [] farms of four acres or slightly more have to deliver 85 liters of milk and 21 kgs of meat every year.

Local Politics

16. "In Kropidlo the headman is always some poor peasant who owns no land, and who is sure to be hounding the village 'rich'. The bailiff of the commune to which the village belongs (wojt) is also a poor peasant. The 'elections' are a pure parody: the village or commune council always elects the person indicated by the Party; and nobody dares to resist.
17. "Kropidlo consists of 30 families. Of that number the owners of nine farms are CP members. Actually not one of them joined the Party from conviction, but only to make their life easier. At least once a week the whole village is called for a political meeting, at which these nine Party members act as sturdy support for the headman. But no motion to set up a collective farm has been proposed in the village as yet /Spring 1953/. As already mentioned /Para 2/ there is no Machine-Tractor Station, and the authorities do nothing to help the farming in Kropidlo.
18. "As in all villages, Kropidlo has a clubroom for Communist activities. Such clubrooms are supervised by the local branches of the Society of Polish-Soviet Friendship or the ZMP (Union of Polish Youth - Związek Młodzieży Polskiej). The secretary of such a local branch is also usually a secretary of the local Primary Party Organization (Podstawowa Organizacja Partyjna). He is responsible for arranging political meetings and also supervises the wall-newspaper in which the names are noted of persons who fail in State deliveries. Such persons are portrayed as enemies of the State and of the people. The Kropidlo farmer described earlier has been caricatured twice on the wall-newspaper as an 'enemy of the people'; once in his village (Kropidlo) and once in the district council seat (Miechow).

25X1 19. "Generally [] misgivings about the future of farming in Poland. Even some state projects, to which much effort and money are given, turn out failures, owing to the peculiarities of the Communist economic system. [] the model pig-breeding farm near Gdynia (close to Oburze). The new pig sties are very smart and clean. But the workers keep to their eight-hour day and have no heart for their work as state employees. The animals look underfed and do not breed properly. The experiment appears a failure.

Local Industry

20. "The three neighbouring towns - Działoszyce, Pinczow and Miechow - are in equally bad shape. From year to year, their situation is growing worse. No new buildings have been erected in these towns. No investments are being made in the district: no new factory; new road or new railway line. Everything looks as it was before World War II, only more dilapidated. The people consider their life more miserable than under the German occupation. In the whole district, the only two industrial enterprises still in operation are the old sugar works in Kazimierza Wielka and brick kilns in Odonow.
21. Private initiative has disappeared completely, in towns as well as villages. Even the village blacksmiths have been compelled to form a 'cooperative'. In the commune of Slaboszow (to which Kropidlo village belongs), there were four blacksmiths in all, who were living in different villages. Now they work in one 'cooperative'. People must now undertake long trips whenever they want their horses shod or small repairs done to their agricultural tools.

25X1

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- 4 -

21. "All flour mills are nationalized, and the peasants have no chance to get a better flour than 'milled in 95%'. In most of the village mills the former owners have remained as managers. [redacted] miller who sometimes agrees to grind corn into a better quality flour, e g 80%, but he points out that he is committing an offence.

Religion

22. "Most, probably all, of the village school teachers are Communists now. The pre-World War II teachers have all been sent away, nobody knows where. The new ones, together with local Communist activities, carry on anti-church propaganda in the villages. Despite their propaganda, village churches have never been so crowded. Although the commune authorities nowadays act as Registrar Offices, Polish peasants still get married in church and fulfill their traditional religious duties scrupulously."

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